

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 23 through 25 as follows:

1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the difference between the pKa of the organic acid groups or the salts of the organic acid groups contained in the copolymers of the first and second compositions is 0.3 or more, and a difference between a pH of the first and second liquid compositions is 0.3 or more.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the difference between the pKa of the organic acid groups or the salts of the organic acid groups contained in the copolymers is at least two.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the pKa of the sulfonic acid of the copolymer of the second liquid composition is at least two.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the organic acid groups of the copolymer of the first liquid composition are selected from benzoic acid groups,

aliphatic dicarboxylic acid groups, aromatic dicarboxylic acid groups, halogen-substituted benzoic acid groups, and sulfonic acid groups.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the amphiphilic block copolymer has an alkenyl ether as a repeating monomer unit.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the functional substance is enclosed by the amphiphilic block copolymer.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the functional substance is a colorant.

21. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for liquid application, said apparatus comprising:

liquid applying means for applying the liquid by the method of claim 24; and
driving means for driving the liquid applying means.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the pKa of the sulfonic acid of the copolymer of the second liquid composition is not higher than zero.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~applying a liquid~~ according to claim 24, wherein the organic acid of the first liquid composition is any one selected from the group consisting of benzoic acid, halogen-substituted benzoic acids, and sulfonic acids.

24. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
a step of applying to a recording medium a liquid consisting of a first liquid composition and a second liquid composition, each of the liquid compositions comprising:

a functional substance;

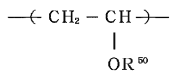
an amphiphilic block copolymer; and

a liquid medium, with a pH and a pKa of an organic acid group or a salt of the organic acid group of the copolymer of the first liquid composition being different than a pH and a pKa of an organic acid group or a salt of the organic acid group of the copolymer of the second liquid composition,

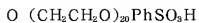
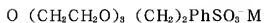
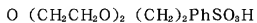
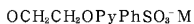
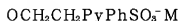
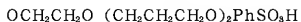
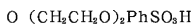
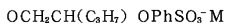
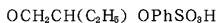
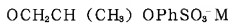
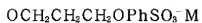
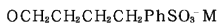
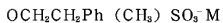
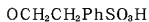
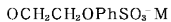
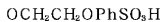
wherein (i) the first liquid composition is greater than the second liquid composition in pH of the liquid compositions, (ii) the first liquid composition is greater than the second liquid composition in pKa of the organic acid group or the salt of the organic acid group of the copolymers, (iii) the organic acid of the copolymer of the second liquid composition is a sulfonic acid, and (iv) an increase in viscosity of the first liquid composition is caused by a decrease in pH of the first liquid composition on contact with the second liquid composition, and

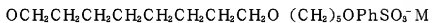
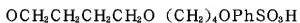
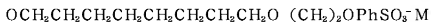
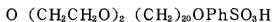
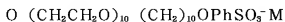
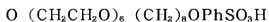
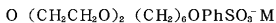
wherein the copolymer of the second liquid composition has a repeating unit structure represented by the following formula:

General formula (5)



where in OR^{50} is represented by any formula selected from the group consisting of the following:





wherein M represents a monovalent or multivalent cation, Ph represents 1,4-phenylene or 1,3-phenylene, Py represents 2,5-pyrimidyl, and Np represents 2,6-naphthylene, 1,4-naphthylene, or 1,5-naphthylene.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~applying a liquid~~ according to claim 24, wherein the copolymer of the second liquid composition is a diblock polymer constituted of (a) isobutyl vinyl ether and 2-vinyloxy-1-biphenyloxyethyl (A-block component), and (b) sodium 4-(2-vinyloxyethoxy)benzenesulfonate (B-block component).